

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN KEITH BALES**, on January 17, 2003 at 3 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Keith Bales, Chairman (R)
Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Ken (Kim) Hansen (D)
Sen. Mike Taylor (R)
Sen. Joseph (Joe) Tropila (D)

Members Excused: Sen. Sam Kitzenberg (R)
Sen. Walter McNutt (R)
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Guest Speakers from MT Department of Agriculture, MT Department of Livestock, and Montana Water Resources Division

The committee met with **Ralph Peck, Director, MT Department of Agriculture; Laura Hinck, MT Department of Agriculture; Marc Bridges, MT Department of Livestock; Jack Stults, Division Administrator, MT Water Resources Division; and John Tubbs, Natural Resources and Conservation**, for information pertaining to possible committee bills.

Ralph Peck, Director, MT Department of Agriculture, gave a brief introduction and passed out information about the Department of Agriculture's responsibilities. He also mentioned a number of business prospects for the state. Further information can be found in the written testimony, **EXHIBIT(ags10a01)**.

Laura Hinck, MT Department of Agriculture, spoke about the state's Japanese Beetle trapping program. She submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT(ags10a02)**.

SEN. BALES took a moment to acknowledge the **Young Stock Growers Association** who came for the meeting.

Marc Bridges, MT Department of Livestock, provided information about the MT Department of Livestock. He explained that his department concentrates on animal disease and theft and livestock predators. He also gave details concerning the MT Board of Milk Control and the MT Board of Horse Racing.

Jack Stults, Division Administrator, MT Water Resources Division, began by emphasizing how important water is to the livelihood of Montana. He explained that water rights have been a large issue during all of Montana's history and need special attention. The details of the department he represents are outlined in a brochure he passed out, **EXHIBIT(ags10a03)**. He also passed out information regarding the Bean Lake III supreme court decision, **EXHIBIT(ags10a04)**.

John Tubbs, Natural Resources and Conservation, also presented information regarding Montana's water resources, including details concerning the state's reservoirs, dams, and canals. Most of his lecture concentrated on the Vision 2005 program. Details for this can be found in **EXHIBIT(ags10a05)**.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

SEN. TAYLOR asked **Laura Hinck** how much is spent on the Japanese Beetle program. She answered that last year they spent approximately \$3,000. **SEN. TAYLOR** further asked if the traps

capture any other insects. **Laura Hinck** said many other insects get in the traps, such as flies, yellow jackets. **SEN. TAYLOR** asked if airport security could help monitor the Japanese Beetle traps, especially since that staff often is responsible for tracking down other foreign objects, such as fruit or soil.

Director Peck said airport security monitors were not currently involved in the Japanese Beetle program, but he would present the idea to members of his committee.

SEN HANSEN asked **Mr. Peck** if there is any way that money could be

SEN TAYLOR asked **Marc Bridges** why Montanans can't ship their meat interstate. **Mr. Bridges** explained that because of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the state cannot ship its meat. He also emphasized that Montana has lived up to the federal meat inspection standards and repeatedly has received excellent ratings. **SEN TAYLOR** mentioned this policy needed to change.

SEN TAYLOR asked **Mr. Bridges** if horse information could be traced back to birth. **Mr. Bridges** answered yes and no. He explained that it was sometimes possible to track an in-state horse because there is a law stating every time a horse is sold, there must be a change in ownership inspection. This becomes more difficult with imported horses.

SEN TAYLOR asked if there was still a 30 day quarantine on blue tongue disease. **Mr. Bridges** explained that from Oct. 1 to Mar. 31, cattle could be shipped to Canada if they were going to a feed lot. During this time, only one blue tongue test would be required. He also noted that Montana was named a low incident state for blue tongue disease so now only one test is required, instead of two. **Mr. Bridges** also mentioned that from Apr. 1 to Sept. 30, trade barriers kick in again.

SEN TAYLOR asked **Mr. Stults** what judiciary/legislative resources would he need to stabilize his division. **Mr. Stults** explained he currently had 10 people working on the project, costing approximately \$600,000 a year. At that rate, he proposed it would probably take 20 years to complete the work that needed to be done. He felt that an increase in money would allow them to hire more people, allowing for the work to be done faster.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4:45 P.M.

SEN. KEITH BALES, Chairman

JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

KB/JS

EXHIBIT (ags10aad)